

PILGRIMAGE OPENS CHARTER

APR 25 1981

Sunday, February 1, was a great day in the history of Pilgrimage United Church of Christ, Boise. It was the day of the opening of the Charter of Membership. Twenty people comprised the first group of charter members. As a group, they joined together in the Covenant, and the Rev. Ted Edquist led them in their commitments to be faithful members. The Rev. George Gunn of Nampa led the congregation in prayer. Following the Reception of Members, each charter member signed the Covenant.

Bill Hawk, organizing pastor, says this day was one of the high points of his ministry. So many people have worked so hard to make this day come into being, and on this day we celebrated the labors of these people, the grace and guidance of God, and the vision that makes it possible to continue the pilgrimage of faith. We also made commitments to our future together. Twelve families committed themselves and \$7,000 to the ministries of the church for 1981.

The service ended with the sacrament of Holy Communion, which was served by the Rev. Jim Nolan and the Rev. Ted Edquist.

Bill Hawk says there were 75 people in this small house that is the home of Pilgrimage people. This is a miracle in and of itself---a miracle the floor did not cave in. Ted Edquist says he had a new experience in his ministry--the first time he served communion to people seated in the bathroom.

It was a great day. Pilgrimage continues to grow. We are challenged to make decisions fast enough to assure people that we have room for them. What a wonderful problem to have!!



PACIFIC UNIVERSITY SUNDAY: APRIL 26

Again this year, the Pacific University/Central Pacific Conference Relations Task Force and the Mission and Outreach Department are calling upon churches to observe Pacific University Sunday. The Date: April 26. Nationally this date is observed as College Heritage Sunday. A special bulletin insert has been prepared to mark the occasion and has been sent to local churches for their use. In addition, Pacific University will provide speakers and/or musicians for church services or special meetings on the 26th. If you would like to arrange for a Pacific University representative for your church, you are invited to contact Dave Lowe, Pacific University, Forest Grove, Or. 97116.



- Photo by Betty Ramsey of Wright Com.

CPC REPRESENTED AT CONFERENCE ON RURAL LIFE



Sixty United Church of Christ farmers, ranchers and clergy gathered in Lodi, California, January 28-29, for a two-day Conference on Rural America. Central Pacific Conference was represented by the Reverend Cathy Barker and Mr. Bob Rietmann, Ione.

The conference, one of four regional gatherings sponsored by the 1.8 million member denomination, was unique for a church which counts most of its members in America's cities and suburbs.

Keynote speaker Stephen Commins of UCLA spoke straight to that point. "The Christian community needs to push for better understanding and relationships between farmers and consumers," he emphasized. "Urban people have clout. We need to help them see that it's to their advantage to support policies that preserve family farming, create access to land for farming and provide a fair market return for farmers."

Commins, an Episcopal priest and international food expert, also chided the church for its insensitivity to the farmer's need to make a profit.

"The church has been economically naive," he said. "We can create a just farm policy which is also just for the hungry. These two things are not contradictory. You can feed the hungry without turning farms into non-profit, charitable institutions."

The conference ended with delegates recommending that the state and national church offices affirm rural churches whenever possible, recommending long-term rural pastorates as a career option and not as a stepping-stone, and educating their urban constituencies about the problems and issues in rural America.

NEW AUDIO VISUAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The Conference has been given a set of Oregon nature slides arranged for use in illustrating readings from the Psalms on the theme of nature as God's creative provision. A script accompanies the carousel of slides. Program time: 7 minutes if used only with script of selections from the Psalms; 14 minutes if shown again informing the audience of identification of nature scenes and subjects. (Thanks to Ruby Peregrine for making these slides prepared by The Rev. Vern Holloway available.)

The National Youth Event, a slide with tape presentation on the UCC National Youth Event held at Carleton College during the Summer of 1980. In addition to providing an excellent eyewitness account of the event, segments of the major speeches provide basis for youth discussions.

Witness in the Americas, a 12-minute color filmstrip with tape cassette, depicting the diverse work of the UCC in collaboration with Christian partners throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Road to Zapotal, a 143-frame color filmstrip with tape cassette produced in cooperation with Church World Service to inform people on the development work going on in Honduras.

LINCOLN CITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH has 23 choir robes to be given away. They are in good condition -- gold color with brown and cream reversible stoles.

Any church interested, please contact the Rev. James Jones, P. O. Box 945, Lincoln City, Or. 97367 -- phone 994-2378.

SPECIAL NEWS SUPPLEMENT

TASK FORCE ON CHURCH AND AGING

A THEOLOGY OF AGING

Religion's role is the affirming and communicating of values. Throughout the scriptures from the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" to the writings of the apostles, the religious community has the role of advocacy of human rights. A primary responsibility of the church is that of being the instigator of a system of values for the individual and for society as a whole.

The religious community also has the role of being the "compassionate community." A community that seeks out those in need of protecting the weak, defending the right of persons and providing services to meet the physical and spiritual needs of all human beings.

The local congregation has the responsibility of making this specific to the local situation and to individuals. The mission of the local congregation is the implementation of the role and responsibility of the religious community to a specific geographical area and to individuals of all ages, races, economic classes and political persuasions. The congregation not only should provide a support system for the individual and the family, but can be an advocate for the frail and handicapped.

The community not only seeks to sensitize the political and social structures to the needs of persons, but can touch directly those areas of greatest need. The fellowship of the community needs to support the frail and handicapped in their loneliness which so often destroys the life and spirit of the institutionalized and the shut-in.

Another area of responsibility of the religious community as the proponent of moral values, as the community of concern, is being the advocate of human dignity and worth. If we believe human dignity and worth is God's gift to all persons, then the church must become an active opponent of all that destroys or degrades the human person. Agism is, with racism, one of the most vicious and degrading prejudices of our time. We must confront and oppose agism, racism and sexism in the private and public sectors if we take seriously the conviction that we are our brother's keeper, the custodian of our brother's and sister's honor, worth and dignity.

What was said of civilization, "...that its final judgment is what it does to the individual...." is even more true of religion. The Church and the church community must continually lift up the worth and dignity of all its members -- which includes the elderly, the frail, inactive older person, as well as the young and involved persons in our congregations.

Dr. Walter McGettigan, Chairperson
The Governor's Task Force on Aging

HELP IN DEVELOPING THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY ON AGING

After the theological basis for a church's ministry on aging has been explored, after the needs for such a ministry have been cited again and again, and after the commitment of the United Church of Christ to this cause has been duly emphasized, the very practical and sometimes difficult questions are asked: What exactly can the local congregation do? What should the program consist of? Where do we get some guidance? Are there any resource materials available?

The first practical thing to do is to select a willing chairperson for aging concerns in the church. If a committee can be recruited to work with him or her, so much the better. Then, his/her name, address and telephone number should be reported to the Conference Office so that he/she can immediately be put on the mailing list for minutes of the Conference Task Force on Aging and can be invited to occasional meetings of the Task Force.

Obviously the church intends to be a caring community. For the elderly, this goal is especially important. All too often the elderly person is lonely, with children and grandchildren living at great distances and sometimes with few contemporary long-time friends still living. The church in such a situation needs to perform the functions of a loving, extended family. A very old Oregon lady was asked some years ago, "Aren't you terribly lonely? You have no family and your contemporaries are all gone." She replied, "No, I'm not lonely; my church is my family." Perhaps without organization her small church had performed for this lady a great ministry.

But most churches, especially the larger ones, need some organization to get the job done. For example, somebody (perhaps the church office) needs to keep an inventory of elderly people living alone or elderly couples who need assistance. It is not enough simply to receive calls for help; often, pride stands in the way of calls being made.

Regional and national church organizations are beginning to publish helpful materials to assist in developing conference and local church ministries on aging. The following have come to the attention of the Conference Task Force on Aging and are recommended as useful guides:

Resource Book on Aging, Suseelan, M.A., United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Health and Welfare Division, New York, N.Y. 10001.

Clingan, D.F., Aging Persons in the Community of Faith, Institute on Religion and Aging, 1975. (Order from Christian Board of Publication, Box 179, St. Louis, Mo. 63166.)

The Church and Aging, Presbyterian Senior Services, 2095 Broadway, New York, 10023.

How To, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 132 W. 31st St., New York 10001.

Duhan, Henry, Manual to Assist Congregations in Ministering to Their Elderly Members, Interfaith Commission on Aging, Missouri Council of Churches. (Available through our Conference Office.)

The Resource Book on Aging which has been available within the last year or so in our church is excellent in providing brief discussions of the theology of aging, the characteristics of the elderly, elderly persons' needs, but it does little in telling how to organize in the local church. There is a need for a thorough-going treatment of this phase of ministry in a companion volume. In the meantime, some help is available in the mimeographed leaflet entitled How To.

The other sources listed are from outside our church, but are very helpful and are available at minimal expense. In reading through all these references and also reflecting on our two-year experience with the Conference Task Force on Aging, this writer would mention a small sampling of ideas on local church organization of a ministry on aging:

1. Develop an information service on aging, including general information, to the entire membership, so that the entire phenomenon will be better understood and specific information on community services available through the Area Agency on Aging or other agencies will be known.

2. Seek not to duplicate or to compete with services generally available but to cooperate with and to supplement those services. Example: Public special bus transportation may be available during the week but not on Sunday; the church should try to provide needed Sunday transportation.
3. The elderly should not only be considered as candidates for special concern and care, but also as candidates for responsible leadership in the church in which their long experience is a valuable resource.
4. Specific programs should be planned to provide appropriate recognition for the elderly. Also, special programs of an inter-generational nature with young and old joining in the planning should be an on-going part of the life of a congregation.
5. The church should invite and expect the elderly to participate as fully as possible and not to embrace the "myth" that they should accept a passive, disengagement role.

This writer could go on and on with ideas gleaned from resource materials and experience. But it is hoped that this article has made clear that there is help available through printed materials and from members of the Central Pacific Conference Task Force on Aging.

-- Dr. M.A.F. Ritchie

NEED FOR A SPECIAL MINISTRY TO RURAL ELDERLY

Among those who work with programs for the elderly, it is generally agreed that rural elderly have all too many unmet needs. These special needs of the rural elderly will be among the urgent problems discussed at the forthcoming White House Conference on Aging in Washington, D.C., November 30 to December 3. Already in Oregon at the state conference and in local discussion groups, special concerns for aging in the rural community have been expressed. Certainly these concerns should be involved in our thinking, our prayers and our programming in Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ.

To personalize the situation, let us consider the case of Mrs. John Smith (or Jones, Johnson, etc.) who lives north of Rural Retreat just before you get to Buffalo Gap. She lives alone, having lost her husband John a year ago.

Arthritis has limited her activity. She can no longer drive the 1960 Chevrolet she and John enjoyed so much. She used to wield an ax and ready wood for the stove with ease. But not any more; the pain is too severe. John had always insisted on heating the small house with the big wood stove; of course, the kitchen has electric equipment. But Mrs. Smith, or Sally as her friends call her, still has her independent spirit. She abhors the thought of going to live in any "cooperative living community for the elderly."

Once or twice a month, Mrs. Smith needs to go to see her doctor. Transportation is a problem, since there is no doctor in nearby Rural Retreat. For some years she has gone to Dr. Smathers in the county seat, Roanokeville, about twenty miles distance.

The special bus for elderly sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging has responded a time or two for the trip to the doctor. But arranging for it is hard to manage on account of the many calls for the bus, especially from the people in the towns. Of course, the bus can pick up a dozen people in town in the time it takes to come out to the country to get Mrs. Smith.

Then there is the matter of getting the groceries and keeping a supply of wood or of persuading Sally to put in an electric furnace. The nearest neighbor Tom Brown has been kind about buying things for Sally at the store, but Tom and his wife Nellie have just decided to move to Roanokeville for better jobs. And the high school boy who had been cutting wood and stacking it at a convenient place has just gone off to college.

Sally Smith is a member of the Rural Retreat Community Church, has been for 50 years or more. Of course, she hasn't attended lately; just no way to get there. Several members have come by to visit. And the minister has also dropped in a time or two. He politely asked about her needs, and of course was told she was fine. Oh yes, someone also brought her a packet of envelopes in which to send her weekly pledge money for the year.

As members of the Rural Retreat Community Church Council, what should you or I do in the case of Mrs. John Smith?

In the first place, it should be suggested that some one person or a committee in the church be appointed to have special concern for the elderly.

Secondly, representatives of the church should check on the availability of Area Agency on Aging services. The rights of the rural elderly respecting transportation should be ascertained.

Next a program of action should be organized. Mrs. Smith should be informed of services for the elderly available in the county, and she should be assisted in arranging for the services. Then the church should arrange to provide needed services which are not available through other agencies.

The challenge to the church in this situation is to become Sally Smith's "family". The church has been described many times as "a caring community". In relation to Mrs. Smith, it has the opportunity to live up to its billing.

A top priority is getting her to medical appointments. If the AAA bus is not available church members can arrange rides, while someone is checking on her rights with respect to the special bus service.

Assistance in shopping can be arranged by members taking turns adding her list to theirs. And perhaps they could invite her to ride along from time to time so that she would have the satisfaction of making her own purchases.

Rides to church services should be arranged. In addition she should be brought to circle meetings, church dinners, etc.

Telephone reassurance calls should be scheduled, not just from the church office, but also from different members of the congregation.

Some church member who is knowledgeable about taxes should offer to assist on this often very difficult problem for widows. Perhaps she should be reminded of the tax deferral program of the State of Oregon.

Members of church groups should not only arrange for her to attend but should see that she has the opportunity to be an active rather than a passive member. Also, she might like to have a meeting at her home, given some help with the refreshments.

Obviously, members should be encouraged to visit Mrs. Smith so that she will be able to escape the feelings of isolation that can make living alone quite desolate.

The program outlined would take some effort, but it might spell the difference between misery and happiness for Sally Smith. Of course, she is fictitious, a composite of persons the writer has known or heard about.

CENTRAL PACIFIC CONFERENCE PERSONS NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL OFFICES

Conference Minister Don Sevetson has received word from the Thirteenth General Synod Nominating Committee that six Central Pacific Conference persons will be nominated to national instrumentality positions. The Rev. Linda Mines Elliott, pastor of Meridian Church, Wilsonville, has been nominated to the Executive Council. Robert Dressler, a member of Portland First, has been nominated as an Alternate Nominee to the Office of Communication. Four Conference persons have been nominated to the Corporate Board on the Board for Homeland Ministries: The Rev. Douglas A. Smyth, Associate Minister at the Forest Grove UCC; Edward Johns, a member of St. Andrew's Church, Portland, and former Conference Moderator; Peggy Clark, a member of Boise First; and as an Alternate Nominee, Edith Sherman, Parkrose Church, Portland.

Currently the Conference has 11 persons serving on national instrumentalities: Board for Homeland Ministries: Don Eaton, Cedar Hills; Cathy Thomas, The Dalles; The Rev. Sam Johnson, Highland; The Rev. Anne Smith, Portland First; Bruce Burda, Boise First; Ella Powell, Highland; The Rev. Charles Ross, Parkrose. (These latter four complete their terms this year.) Currently serving on the Board for World Ministries are: Fred Martin, Ione; Becky Luther, Hillsboro; and Sally Bartley, Parkrose, whose term expires this year. William Jackson, Bethel Church, Beaverton, serves on the Directorate for the Office for Church Life and Leadership.

PORLAND FIRST WHEAT GROUP PUBLISHES COOK BOOK

At Portland's First Congregational Church, a group concerned about world hunger has recently published a cookbook, "DISHES DELICIOUS--NATURALLY". Goals in preparing this book were to provide recipes for natural, unprocessed foods, low in content of sugar and fat, high in protein value -- foods that are good and good for you. The publication has been well received in the congregation and is now available to others. Orders may be sent to First Congregational Church, 1126 S.W. Park, Portland, Or. 97205. Cost (including mailing) is \$4.75.

MISSION NOTES: UPDATE ON REFUGEES

In 1980, Church World Service, the service arm of the National Council of Churches, set an all-time record for refugees resettled in the USA in a single year: nearly 40,000! This large number was primarily the result of the continuing influx of Indochinese refugees and the large number of Cubans who arrived in Florida during the year.

FOLLOW THE LEADER



The children in this picture are pretending to be ducks--flapping their arms, waddling to and fro, and following the mother "duck"--as they play in a church-supported day-care nursery in Indonesia. This is one of many photographs featured in a photo-essay pamphlet entitled "The United Church of Christ at Work: In Asia". The pamphlet is available, free in any quantity, from the Stewardship Council.

These are children of poor mothers who work outside the home, mostly at menial jobs, due to economic necessity. The children come to the Christian day-care nursery every morning to play, sing, be fed--and learn to get along with other youngsters.

Your gifts through our church help to make possible hundreds of such centers throughout the world.



DEBBIE FRANCE started to work in the Conference Office on January 26th as Receptionist/Clerk. We are very happy to have her with us. She is pictured holding her dog Gidget.

The Last Word

- Don Sevetson -



"Just give me the facts, please" was the pet phrase of television detective Jack Webb back in the fifties. That's what we expect witnesses, and reporters, to do. And the media (especially television) are frequently accused of failure to report all the facts, or of that other "no-no" -- interpreting the news.

The debate is on the wrong issue. You can't report all the news (the philosopher Whitehead once remarked that "Events are inexhaustible" -- you will never run out of ways to talk about a simple occasion). Therefore, the necessary decision about what news to report (and what to leave out) is an act of interpretation. That's what the debate should really be about. Principles of interpretation.

The same shift needs to take place within the Protestant community. It is fruitless to ask whether this church (or policy, or preacher, or denomination) is Biblical or un-Biblical. The right question is "How is the Bible being interpreted by this-or-that individual or group in this situation.

That's not a question that can be answered easily or quickly. In fact, Jesus spent a lot of time discussing scriptural interpretation with his disciples and with his critics. When Jesus said, "It was said of old....but I say to you", he was interpreting scripture as well as creating it.

As your pastor prepares the Easter sermon, four different Easter accounts (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20), each different, will require study. Together, pastor and congregation will engage in acts of interpretation and application, as well as worship and praise.

Some Christians claim to have escaped the problems of interpretation. They accept the entire Bible, or so they claim, as literal truth. But there is no such "out". The Bible can't be open to all of its pages at once. The decision as to what to select for emphasis is simply another act of interpretation.

How do you interpret the Bible? How do I? How can we teach, and challenge, and enrich each other in our mutual effort to rediscover the Biblical vision? These are the questions that every responsible Christian asks. As we pursue this goal, we can be proud--whatever our principles of interpretation--that the Preamble to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ states:

"The United Church of Christ.....looks to the Word of God in The Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world."

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